

1 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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18-CR-204 (NGG)

3 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

United States Courthouse  
Brooklyn, New York

4 Plaintiff,

5 -against-

June 12, 2018  
2:00 p.m.

6 KEITH RANIERE AND ALLISON MACK,

7 Defendants.

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10 TRANSCRIPT OF CRIMINAL CAUSE FOR STATUS CONFERENCE  
11 BEFORE THE HONORABLE NICHOLAS G. GARAUFI  
12 UNITED STATES SENIOR DISTRICT JUDGE

13 APPEARANCES

14 For the Government: UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
Eastern District of New York  
15 271 Cadman Plaza East  
Brooklyn, New York 11201  
16 BY: MOIRA KIM PENZA, AUSA  
TANYA HAJJAR, AUSA  
17 KARIN K. ORENSTEIN, AUSA

18 For Defendant Ranieri: BRAFMAN & ASSOCIATES, P.C.  
19 767 Third Avenue  
New York, New York 10017  
20 BY: MARC A. AGNIFILO, ESQ.  
TENY GERAGOS, ESQ.  
21 -and-  
DEROHANNESIAN & DEROHANNESIAN  
22 677 Broadway, Suite 707  
Albany, New York 12207  
23 BY: PAUL DEROHANNESIAN, II, ESQ.  
DANIELLE R. SMITH, ESQ.  
24  
25

1 APPEARANCES (Continued)

2 For Defendant Mack: KOBRE & KIM LLP  
3 800 Third Avenue  
4 New York, New York 10022  
BY: SEAN STEPHEN BUCKLEY, ESQ.  
WILLIAM F. MCGOVERN, ESQ.

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20  
21 Court Reporter: Georgette K. Betts, RPR, FCRR, CCR  
22 Phone: (718) 804-2777  
23 Fax: (718) 804-2795  
Email: Georgetteb25@gmail.com

24 Proceedings recorded by mechanical stenography. Transcript  
25 produced by computer-aided transcription.

1 THE COURT: Please be seated in the back.

2 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Criminal cause for status  
3 conference. Counsel, please state your appearances.

4 MS. PENZA: Moira Kim Penza for the United States.  
5 Good afternoon, Your Honor. With me at counsel table are AUSA  
6 Tanya Hajjar and Karin Orenstein. And with Your Honor's  
7 permission, Samantha Fry, who is an intern with our office who  
8 is currently attending Harvard Law School.

9 THE COURT: Very good. Thank you.

10 MS. PENZA: Thank you, Your Honor.

11 THE COURT: Please be seated.

12 Yes.

13 MR. AGNIFILO: Good afternoon, Your Honor, Marc  
14 Agnifilo, Teny Geragos and with Your Honor's permission we  
15 have an intern with us, Sophia Agnifilo. We represent  
16 Mr. Raniere. And we also have co-counsel.

17 MR. DEROHANNESIAN: Paul DerOhannessian and Danielle  
18 R. Smith.

19 THE COURT: Okay. Where does she go to law school?

20 MR. AGNIFILO: She's still in undergrad, Your Honor.

21 THE COURT: Undergrad. Welcome. Yes.

22 MR. BUCKLEY: Good afternoon, Your Honor, Sean  
23 Buckley and William McGovern of Kobre Kim on behalf of  
24 Ms. Mack, who is seated at counsel table as well.

25 THE COURT: Please be seated everyone. Thank you

1 and welcome.

2 At this point I'd like to hear from the government  
3 as to the status of the pretrial developments.

4 MS. PENZA: Thank you, Your Honor.

5 Your Honor, the government has been providing  
6 discovery on an ongoing basis. We -- as we represented  
7 originally, there is a significant amount of discovery in this  
8 case. We have recently received additional discovery. We  
9 intend to make a further production this week and we expect  
10 that it will still be ongoing for some period of time. We  
11 just received, for example, two email accounts, Your Honor,  
12 that we believe will contain, at the very least, Rule 16  
13 evidence to be provided to the defendants and we're going to  
14 do that as expeditiously as possible.

15 We also, as we expressed to Your Honor, there are at  
16 least -- there is at least one account where we have firewall  
17 concerns and we have set up a firewall team. We have an FBI  
18 agent and an AUSA who are assigned to that and they will be  
19 reviewing materials quickly so we can produce those as well.

20 THE COURT: Now, I set a trial date of October 1st,  
21 when will you be done with your discovery transfers to the  
22 defendants?

23 MS. PENZA: Your Honor, it is difficult for us to  
24 estimate right now because we are still in the process of  
25 receiving certain materials. We do intend to do it on a

1 rolling basis. As we did tell Your Honor earlier, we do  
2 expect -- at our last status conference, we do expect a  
3 superseding indictment in this case and that there will be  
4 additional discovery obligations in accordance with the  
5 superseding indictment as well.

6 THE COURT: So this would be a superseding  
7 indictment as to these defendants?

8 MS. PENZA: As to these defendants -- as to these  
9 defendants, yes.

10 THE COURT: And what about the issue of any  
11 additional defendants that might come along and whether we  
12 would be having one trial or more than one trial in this case?

13 MS. PENZA: Your Honor, at this time, based on our  
14 ongoing investigation and the charges that we do expect to  
15 bring in the superseding indictment, which we have made  
16 representations to at least Mr. Agnifilo on the phone earlier  
17 this week, that we expect to do that within the next month and  
18 a half, we would be seeking -- the government would expect  
19 that the defendants that we seek to charge would be tried at  
20 the same time based on the charges that we anticipate  
21 bringing.

22 THE COURT: So let me just understand this in terms  
23 of scoping out my schedule and not to put you in a corner, but  
24 believe it or not this is not my only case, so are we talking  
25 about a trial of a week, a month --

1 MS. PENZA: Your Honor, we anticipate --

2 THE COURT: -- three months?

3 MS. PENZA: We anticipate it would be more in the  
4 range of three months.

5 THE COURT: A three-month trial. That's including  
6 the defense?

7 MS. PENZA: Yes.

8 THE COURT: All right. Let me hear from the  
9 defense.

10 MR. AGNIFILO: Thank you, Your Honor.

11 Our concern, and maybe it's not first and foremost,  
12 our concern is if new defendants are added a month and a half,  
13 two months from now, and if it's the government's position  
14 they want to have one trial rather than multiple trials, I can  
15 imagine the scenario where a defense lawyer coming into this  
16 case and a defendant coming into this case for the first time  
17 in say August, says an October 1st trial date is not possible  
18 for him or her, and then the date gets moved or it does not,  
19 that's up to Your Honor. And so it's related to a couple of  
20 things, not the least of which is our bail application, and I  
21 can do that whenever Your Honor is ready for me to do that.

22 THE COURT: Well, I was trying to ascertain whether  
23 I should set a motion schedule at this point and what it  
24 appears is that because you haven't received all of the  
25 discovery, it would be very difficult for you to agree to a

1 motion schedule if we establish a motion schedule where we  
2 don't yet know how much work is going to be involved on your  
3 part in making such a motion, and facing -- working back from  
4 an October 1st trial date. As a practical matter, if there's  
5 a superseding indictment and that superseding indictment  
6 includes other defendants, it's going to restart the clock  
7 anyway and then there's the question of if some of the people  
8 indicted are potentially cooperators, there are all kinds of  
9 issues here. This is a more complicated case than your garden  
10 variety felon in possession case, for instance, or even a  
11 larceny case or any of those. So what I'm trying to get a  
12 sense of is whether what we're really talking about in terms  
13 of timing, and it's actually I think premature to set a motion  
14 schedule.

15 Last time, with all due respect to the government,  
16 they said it would be four to six weeks or something like that  
17 and we would have a superseding indictment. I thought it was  
18 scheduled today, a meeting for today we'd have a better  
19 understanding what the timing would be for a trial, but now  
20 that's been pushed back and we're talking about July or  
21 August, right?

22 MS. PENZA: Yes, Your Honor.

23 THE COURT: Right. So what I think I ought to do is  
24 make a schedule such that we have a status conference in July  
25 and we see where we are. And if we have to go ahead with just

1 a trial of two people on October 1st, you can hurry up and  
2 make your motions at that point.

3 Does that sound reasonable?

4 MR. AGNIFILO: That's good for us, yes.

5 THE COURT: I know it's good for you.

6 MR. AGNIFILO: I agree.

7 THE COURT: I think you would agree with that. And  
8 the government, what it does to the government is it tells the  
9 government that they have to move with alacrity to deal with  
10 any additional potential defendants in the case so that we  
11 have a better sense of how many people I would be trying and  
12 then we can figure out when I'm going to try them.

13 There's one time we're not trying this case, the  
14 month of December there is not going to be a trial because  
15 it's not fair to jurors. So I just don't do December -- I've  
16 learned after 18 years that I don't conduct long trials with a  
17 two-week break for Christmas and New Year's and Hanukkah and  
18 Kwanza, I've got everything covered now, and so it would have  
19 to be after the first of the year, which is the winter, which  
20 brings other issues along the way, but there's also the  
21 question of should any of the defendants remain in custody,  
22 then there's that concern as well.

23 MR. AGNIFILO: Understood.

24 THE COURT: It's also a concern for someone who is  
25 on house arrest. It's not pleasant, even though it's at home



1 it is still not pleasant and I understand all of that and  
2 there is a presumption of innocence which we have to recognize  
3 and appreciate.

4 So why don't we set a schedule for the next meeting.  
5 But before we do, let me hear from Ms. Mack's counsel.

6 MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Your Honor. We have  
7 nothing to add to Your Honor's assessment and agree with it in  
8 all respects.

9 THE COURT: All right. Thank you. So we need to do  
10 something late in July.

11 MS. PENZA: Yes, Your Honor.

12 THE COURT: How about Wednesday, July 25th?

13 MR. AGNIFILO: That's fine, Your Honor.

14 THE COURT: Is that okay for Ms. Mack's counsel?

15 MR. BUCKLEY: Yes, Your Honor.

16 MS. PENZA: That's fine for the government, Your  
17 Honor.

18 THE COURT: We'll do that at 2 p.m. on Wednesday,  
19 July 25th.

20 And you have an application?

21 MS. PENZA: Yes, Your Honor. In light of the  
22 ongoing trial process, we would like to exclude time in order  
23 to allow the preparation for trial. I do not -- I don't know  
24 Ms. Mack's current position. Last time Ms. Mack's position  
25 was that she wanted to waive Speedy Trial to continue to

1 engage in plea negotiations. At this time the government is  
2 still willing to engage in such plea negotiations, but we have  
3 not heard from defense counsel.

4 THE COURT: Let's start with Ms. Mack's counsel.

5 Does Ms. Mack's counsel consent to the exclusion of  
6 time?

7 MR. BUCKLEY: Your Honor, we have no objection to  
8 the exclusion. We understand that additional discovery is  
9 forthcoming as soon as this week, so we have no objection  
10 because we need the additional time to review discovery and  
11 consider motions.

12 THE COURT: Mr. Agnifilo.

13 MR. AGNIFILO: We do not consent to the exclusion.

14 THE COURT: All right. Under the statute, the time  
15 is excluded as Ms. Mack's counsel has not objected to the  
16 exclusion of time between now and July 25th. The time is  
17 excluded between today and July 25th, 2018, in the interest of  
18 justice for the continuation of discovery delivery and plea  
19 negotiations.

20 MS. PENZA: Thank you, Your Honor.

21 THE COURT: So that brings us to the next issue.

22 MR. AGNIFILO: Yes, Your Honor.

23 Your Honor, we've given the Court a fairly length  
24 written submission, the government has responded, we replied.  
25 I think given the circumstances of this case, a reasonable and

1 appropriate set of bail conditions would be to have  
2 Mr. Raniere released on a 10 million-dollar bond; he would be  
3 secured by, at a minimum of two armed security professionals  
4 with TorchStone, and we have the former director of the U.S.  
5 Secret Service is sitting in the second row, third from the  
6 right, Mark Sullivan, who would be working with torch -- there  
7 he is, he has his hand up in the air, Judge. Who would be  
8 working with TorchStone as part of the security detail.

9 Let me put a few things --

10 THE COURT: I'm really curious about this concept  
11 that someone would be on house arrest basically guarded by  
12 people with guns. What is the purpose of having armed guards?  
13 Is the purpose of having armed guards that in case the  
14 individual being guarded tries to flee, they have the  
15 authority to stop him or her and possibly use their guns to  
16 stop the defendant? In other words, to shoot and kill  
17 somebody, which sounds absurd to me frankly on its face, or is  
18 it to stop people from coming in, like reporters or people who  
19 feel wronged by the individual, and then protect the  
20 individual by shooting the intruder. What is the purpose of  
21 an armed guard?

22 MR. AGNIFILO: Sure. So to Your Honor's first  
23 question, it is my understanding of the state of the law that  
24 someone can consent to physical force being used on him or her  
25 but cannot legally consent to deadly physical force being used

1 on him or her. So we would consent to physical -- let me --

2 THE COURT: So then you need a couple of Karate  
3 experts, you don't need someone with a gun.

4 MR. AGNIFILO: If I were more imaginative I would  
5 have led with that. So the idea really at the end of the day  
6 is it's an emphasis on trust rather than arms. And it's a  
7 matter of integrity, it's a matter of reputation. The last  
8 thing, frankly, I want, the last thing that TorchStone wants,  
9 Mr. Sullivan wants is for this to go in the wrong direction,  
10 because that's -- we'd have to come back in front of Your  
11 Honor and nobody wants to be in that position. So the guns  
12 are, I don't know, the icing on the cake. What really keeps  
13 him there is there are guards -- let me back up. This goes to  
14 Your Honor might have been wondering why I structured the bail  
15 application the way I did and there's a reason.

16 There is a trust, a defense trust that has been  
17 created since the inception of this case. It's being  
18 administered by a trustee. The trustee has a lawyer and no  
19 defense costs -- and I say this because the renting of the  
20 apartment, the paying of the armed guards would be defense  
21 costs which could not be paid unless it were ordered by Your  
22 Honor. So the guard, just to be clear, the guards and the  
23 apartment would be paid from this irrevocable trust that's  
24 been created. Right now there is no apartment because there's  
25 no bail condition authorizing the expenditure of money on an

1 apartment. So the idea is this --

2 THE COURT: I'm like the co-trustee if I agree to  
3 this.

4 MR. AGNIFILO: I --

5 THE COURT: It's a condition precedent to the  
6 expenditure of the funds that the Court agree to something of  
7 this nature.

8 MR. AGNIFILO: It ends up being that, but it's not  
9 that by design. It's that because they can't spend anything  
10 unless it's a reasonable defense cost and it's not currently,  
11 as we sit here today, a reasonable defense cost because it's  
12 not been ordered.

13 THE COURT: Well, I'm not aware of the trustee's  
14 name, I'm not aware of who the settlors are of the trust, I'm  
15 not aware of the funds that are in the trust, but put all that  
16 aside, this is not your client's money.

17 MR. AGNIFILO: Correct.

18 THE COURT: No one is coming forward to be a -- to  
19 sign on this bail application, right?

20 MR. AGNIFILO: The way it's currently situated,  
21 that's correct.

22 THE COURT: Right. The purpose of having  
23 individuals act in that capacity is that they place some moral  
24 suasion on the defendant to adhere to the terms of the  
25 release. But there is no one to do that in this case, the way

1     you have structured it.

2             MR. AGNIFILO: That's correct.

3             THE COURT: I'm only talking about your concept.

4             MR. AGNIFILO: Yes.

5             THE COURT: This is a concept.

6             MR. AGNIFILO: That's right.

7             THE COURT: And so someone can write a check for a  
8     large sum of money, take a million dollars just out of air  
9     here, put it into an irrevocable trust and that trust could be  
10    used for the purposes that you have outlined, but there's no  
11    moral suasion placed upon the defendant to adhere to the terms  
12    of the bail because, frankly, he has nothing to lose. The  
13    only people who have something to lose are the settlors of the  
14    trust and perhaps the trustee for some fiduciary misbehavior,  
15    if that should happen, but there's nothing really that keeps  
16    the defendant in tow in effect or -- he has no family members  
17    who are going to sign the bond, he's just -- it's just him.

18            And so the question then becomes, assuming that we  
19    go forward with something like this, how does -- apart from  
20    the fact that there is money available, how does this  
21    guarantee that your client doesn't get on an airplane at  
22    Teterboro Airport without any kind of travel documentation and  
23    fly on a private plane to a place where he gets off the plane  
24    and nobody knows where he is, the flight plan changed in  
25    mid-flight, that happens, and he's gone? And then the only

1 thing that's out there is the bond company, which has to pay  
2 \$10 million because he absconded.

3 MR. AGNIFILO: There is two things: First,  
4 Mr. Sullivan and the other agents of TorchStone aren't going  
5 to let him do that. They're not going to let him leave.

6 Now, I think to Your Honor's other question, the  
7 rules of engagement, as I understand it -- and it's a direct  
8 question, I want to give Your Honor a direct answer -- I don't  
9 believe they've been authorized to shoot him unless it were an  
10 independently dangerous situation. It's a complicated  
11 analysis and probably not one that I'm able to make. But  
12 that's what -- we have very experienced former law enforcement  
13 personnel who are putting their reputations on the line and  
14 rather than moral suasion, we have guards. Moral suasion is  
15 usually the thing that's compelling in these courtrooms for  
16 bringing something back. Here we have something that's more  
17 immediate and more compelling, I submit, which is that we have  
18 actual guards, at least two of them depending on the location,  
19 who are not going to let him leave and who, if there was any  
20 inkling of him trying to leave or do anything inappropriate  
21 whatsoever in violation of Your Honor's condition, would  
22 immediately tell anybody Your Honor wanted us to tell,  
23 including the prosecutors, including pretrial, including the  
24 Court if the Court wanted to be involved in that. Anybody  
25 Your Honor wanted us to tell they're going to tell. This is

1 not the kind of thing where anybody is going to want that to  
2 happen.

3 My job in this case is if the case goes to trial, I  
4 try the case. The guard's job is to make sure Mr. Ranieri is  
5 safe, secure, that he comes back to court each and every time  
6 he has to come back to court through the end of this  
7 proceeding. So what we lack in moral suasion, and Your Honor  
8 is right about that, I think we more than make up for in armed  
9 personnel who are going to secure an apartment that, not that  
10 Mr. Ranieri chooses, that they choose. We're happy to have  
11 pretrial services or anyone from the government or the FBI  
12 involved in that process. We're not trying to keep anybody  
13 out.

14 And the benefits really are these, and I think this  
15 is a significant one. We have a very, appropriately so,  
16 restrictive protective order in this case. I think it is  
17 easier, it's safer, it's more secure to review discovery not  
18 in a prison setting and to prepare a defense in a fairly  
19 complicated case, and a complicated case where there might be  
20 superseding indictments into the future and we all know the  
21 government is continuing to investigate, not in a prison  
22 setting.

23 And here while it's a little, admittedly, unorthodox  
24 the way we structured the bond package, I think it's very  
25 effective. He won't have his passport, he can't apply for new



1 passports and he's going to be watched by guards with a GPS  
2 monitor. So there really are belts and suspenders on this  
3 one. He can't leave because Pretrial Services will have a GPS  
4 monitor on his ankle. He can't leave because he doesn't have  
5 a passport to leave and he can't leave because he has armed  
6 guards who are former very high level law enforcement  
7 officials whose own credibility -- and I mean that's really at  
8 the end of the day I think, you know, a form of moral suasion  
9 and not on the defendant but on the integrity of the process.  
10 The last thing these guys are going to want to have to happen  
11 is Keith Raniere sneaks out behind their back. That would be  
12 a disaster for them professionally. It would be a disaster  
13 for me professionally, I'll say that in front of Your Honor.  
14 Nobody wants that to happen, that would be horrible.

15 And I have every reason to expect that he's going to  
16 come back to court, he's going to fight this case. I don't  
17 want to get too much into the merits of the case, I think it's  
18 a triable case, it's an interesting case, it's a serious case  
19 and it's a triable case.

20 THE COURT: What about the situation with him going  
21 down to, what was it, Puerto Vallarta --

22 MR. AGNIFILO: Mexico.

23 THE COURT: -- Mexico and staying in a gated  
24 community and operating an email account with the protection  
25 that he couldn't be -- he couldn't be checked as to his email.

1 MR. AGNIFILO: So I think for better or worse --

2 THE COURT: Why? Why would you do that if you were  
3 not trying to evade law enforcement?

4 MR. AGNIFILO: Because there are two, in what I've  
5 seen, well-entrenched, passionate factions having nothing to  
6 do with law enforcement that surround Mr. Ranieri. There are  
7 people in Nxivm and in DOS, some of whom are very loyal to  
8 Mr. Ranieri, and there are people who have left Nxivm and/or  
9 DOS who are, from what I've seen, equally passionate  
10 anti-Ranieri folks.

11 And I don't tend to reference the press in Court  
12 matters, but I think it's interesting to note, I think The New  
13 York Times magazine piece the journalist noted people were  
14 taking photographs of her and others at different points in  
15 time. So there's no reason to think -- and I can go through  
16 the details of Mexico, there is no reason to think Mr. Ranieri  
17 was evading law enforcement. I think he was trying to remain  
18 secure in the face of people who I don't think mean him well.  
19 And that's certainly his belief and that's the belief of some  
20 other people. I don't besmirch these people, they are  
21 entitled to their views. But Your Honor asked why would he do  
22 that and I think that's the reason.

23 The reason more pointedly, and I know the government  
24 was concerned about his trip to Mexico, the mother of his  
25 child's visa was about to expire and they traveled to Mexico

1 and when they traveled to Mexico -- we have this in our  
2 written submission --

3 THE COURT: But they are not living in Puerto  
4 Vallarta, they are living five hours away somewhere.

5 MR. AGNIFILO: I think you're right, I don't think  
6 they're in Puerto Vallarta.

7 THE COURT: He's in one place and they are more than  
8 down the road, they are in another area of the country.

9 MR. AGNIFILO: I can double check, I thought they  
10 were all together. Just give me one second, Your Honor.

11 MS. PENZA: Your Honor, at the time of the  
12 defendants apprehension in Mexico the mother of his child I  
13 believe was in Monterrey, while the defendant was in the  
14 Puerto Vallarta area with DOS slaves.

15 THE COURT: With who?

16 MS. PENZA: With DOS slaves including his  
17 co-defendant, Ms. Mack.

18 THE COURT: Oh, you called them DOS slaves, I see.  
19 All right.

20 MR. AGNIFILO: So --

21 THE COURT: So, look, I understand that your  
22 presentation, very extensive, clear presentation, I'm  
23 concerned about the fact that what could happen is that you've  
24 got these law enforcement people, who retired, who are in this  
25 organization, this company, and if he has people who are mad

1 at him then everybody is at risk because he's at risk. If  
2 these people come after him and then you've got people  
3 protecting him with guns. This is not your ordinary bail  
4 application, you understand that.

5 MR. AGNIFILO: I do, I do. But I don't think  
6 there's any reason to think that anyone is going to resort to  
7 violence.

8 THE COURT: No.

9 MR. AGNIFILO: We haven't had that. This group, and  
10 what I mean by the group sometimes it was one group, and then  
11 people left, are much more in to trying to figure out who is  
12 speaking to who and what they are saying. I mean, they are  
13 much more likely to try and hack into -- I'm not suggesting  
14 any of this, I'm just saying what I think the reasonable fear  
15 would be, they are trying to hack into different  
16 communications rather than hurt someone. I don't think  
17 there's -- I have not seen any evidence of anyone trying to  
18 hurt anyone and so we don't have that problem under our  
19 situation because he's not going to have any Internet access.  
20 If Your Honor permits him to have a computer on site, it's not  
21 going to be hooked up to the Internet. We're going to  
22 basically stick a disk in it and go through the government's  
23 discovery to the extent that we can. So I don't think we're  
24 setting up a situation where we're going to have violence. I  
25 think we're just setting up a situation where he is more able

1 to defend himself, easier for his lawyers to see him, easier  
2 for his lawyers to spend time with him and spend time going  
3 through the extensive discovery that we've gotten and will be  
4 getting on the computer and preparing this case for trial. I  
5 mean --

6 THE COURT: All right.

7 MR. AGNIFILO: Thank you, Judge.

8 THE COURT: Is there anything you would like to say  
9 about any of this, ma'am?

10 MS. PENZA: Your Honor, only if you have any  
11 questions, I believe our submission was fairly extensive.

12 THE COURT: Well, you're concerned about the fact  
13 that we don't know where this money is coming from and the  
14 fact that people who have private jets can fly people wherever  
15 they want to fly them and they don't necessarily have to have  
16 travel documentation in order to do that, and we really don't  
17 know whether in effect we're setting up a private jail here,  
18 and does the Court have to start taking into account the fact  
19 that what the Court may be sanctioning is in effect a private  
20 jail with all the accoutrements of a mansion perhaps. People  
21 with a great deal of money can set up a private jail with all  
22 kinds of amenities, then it sort of makes a mockery of the  
23 system of justice, while other people can't get a hundred  
24 dollars together to get out of Rikers Island.

25 I think this is a really big problem. It's not just

1 a social problem, it's a criminal justice problem and I don't  
2 know that I want contribute to it unless I know who is  
3 providing the money and how much we're talking about. If it's  
4 going to be a hundred thousand dollars a month for private  
5 gun-toting guards and placement in some sort of a home that I  
6 don't know the nature of, then I'm a little bit concerned  
7 about it, even apart from the issue of the possibility of  
8 flight.

9 I'm concentrating on flight, but I think that if we  
10 get past the issue of flight and we move on to some of these  
11 other issues, I know that some courts have addressed these  
12 other issues, I'd prefer not to have to do that, but does the  
13 government have a position on all of that?

14 MS. PENZA: Yes, Your Honor. So, Your Honor, the  
15 government absolutely believes that the private jail concept  
16 has inherent problems, but this case in particular is a case  
17 where it clearly is not the right outcome. The only cases in  
18 which this type of private jail has been allowed, which does  
19 have enormous policy implications, have been cases in white  
20 collar criminal cases where the defendants themselves were  
21 putting up enormous sums of their own money. And in this  
22 situation, Your Honor, the defense counsel has given his best  
23 guess as to who is financing the trust in this case --

24 THE COURT: You mean he's given a guess?

25 MS. PENZA: Yes, Your Honor.

1 THE COURT: He doesn't know.

2 MS. PENZA: He doesn't know.

3 THE COURT: Let's put it this way, he hasn't  
4 indicated that he knows.

5 MS. PENZA: He hasn't indicated that he knows. He  
6 has indicated who he believes may be funding the trust.

7 MR. AGNIFILO: I -- it's better that I guess. I  
8 mean, I don't know in that I've never seen the trust  
9 documentation, but, you know, I'm -- I'm --

10 THE COURT: When a surety comes in here I get to  
11 question the surety. I get to say, what is your relationship?  
12 How do you know this person? What's in it for you? Are you  
13 going to be able to cast moral suasion on this individual to  
14 guarantee that this person is going to come back? I get to do  
15 that.

16 What your structure or the structure that's been  
17 sort of devised eliminates is the role of the Court in making  
18 a fair judgment as to whether if, by releasing someone,  
19 they're likely to show up again in court absent, you know,  
20 gunfire. So I'm just concerned about that as much as I'm  
21 concerned about anything else.

22 MR. AGNIFILO: Just so Your Honor -- I didn't want  
23 to interrupt the prosecutor.

24 THE COURT: Continue.

25 MR. AGNIFILO: Go ahead.

1 MS. PENZA: So, Your Honor, the person who the  
2 government believes, based on Mr. Agnifilo's guess --

3 THE COURT: We've all guessed. We've all read the  
4 article in The New York Times magazine, all right. I made a  
5 promise in my life never to finish any article in The New York  
6 Times magazine because they're all too long, but I made an  
7 exception regarding this article. I read the whole thing, so  
8 I've read everything that was put forward there.

9 MS. PENZA: All the way to my shoes, Your Honor.

10 THE COURT: That's all I know about this case is  
11 what I read in The New York Times magazine and the Albany  
12 Times Union. Okay?

13 MS. PENZA: Understood, Your Honor.

14 THE COURT: So that's the extent of my  
15 understanding. And so based on that, I could reach certain  
16 guesses.

17 MS. PENZA: Okay, so, Your Honor, based on that  
18 guess, this is a person who the government does believe has  
19 acted as a co-conspirator in criminal activity with the  
20 defendant.

21 THE COURT: Who has?

22 MS. PENZA: The person who is funding this trust --

23 THE COURT: Yes.

24 MS. PENZA: -- has acted as a co-conspirator of the  
25 defendant over many years. And given that, and in addition to



1 the fact that over years she has given -- when we're talking  
2 about amounts of money --

3 THE COURT: He or she.

4 MS. PENZA: Yes, Your Honor. He or -- this person  
5 on one occasion, just to give Your Honor an example, provided  
6 a 65 million-dollar loan to the defendant for the commodities  
7 market, which then all of that money was lost and has never  
8 been repaid. So this is the type of amounts of money. It is  
9 really unimaginable wealth and limitless wealth that we're  
10 talking about here. So the idea that any amount of money  
11 would not be worth it to this person to allow the defendant to  
12 flee, should we end up in that situation, is unimaginable.

13 And she -- this person, is also somebody who, Your  
14 Honor, is equally capable along with the defendant of trying  
15 to live off the grid. We're talking about people with private  
16 islands, talking about people with access to private air  
17 travel, which the defendant has participated in. People who  
18 have also been using encrypted email. People who have also  
19 been dropping their phones so that the government is unable to  
20 track them. So this is the environment we're operating in,  
21 Your Honor, and so we do believe that the risk of flight is  
22 significant in this case. But, Your Honor, we also believe  
23 that this, unlike many cases in which private jails have been  
24 proposed, is a case where there is real danger to witnesses,  
25 to victims if the defendant is released.

1           This is somebody who has a network operating around  
2     the world that literally one text message he can mobilize  
3     hundreds of people who could do his bidding and so that, with  
4     all due respect to Mr. Sullivan, there is nothing that  
5     Mr. Sullivan is going to be able to do on a day in, day out  
6     basis to prevent something like that from happening, Your  
7     Honor, and people are truly petrified of the defendant. This  
8     is an organization that has operated for years by manipulating  
9     people, by abusing people and by intimidating them.

10           THE COURT: Anything else before I rule?

11           MR. AGNIFILO: Yes. So we have spoken about this  
12     and Your Honor's right, Your Honor's suspicion of who is  
13     funding the trust, whether that's a hundred percent or  
14     99.5 percent, that's exactly what it is.

15           THE COURT: My suspicion is not a suspicion, I'm  
16     just saying that in the ordinary course sureties come before  
17     the Court and explain what their relationship is with a  
18     defendant and attempt to give the Court some assurance that as  
19     a surety they are doing so voluntarily, that they have a  
20     relationship, that they will do everything they can to oversee  
21     the defendant's behavior to the extent that the defendant will  
22     return to court, and provide that sort of assurance or group  
23     of assurances so the Court can feel that there is a strong  
24     likelihood that the person will not abscond, among other  
25     things.

1 MR. AGNIFILO: I understand. I understand the  
2 Court's concern completely. I can absolutely attempt to make  
3 that happen. I don't control this person, this person has her  
4 own lawyers, but Your Honor's concern is very well taken by  
5 me. I hear the Court loud and clear and if that's something  
6 that --

7 THE COURT: But then there is this other issue  
8 that's raised obliquely by the government that this supposed  
9 financial backer of this irrevocable trust may be either an  
10 unindicted co-conspirator or subsequently an indicted  
11 co-conspirator with the defendant, where are we then? That  
12 complicates the analysis substantially it would seem to me.

13 MR. AGNIFILO: It would complicate it in one regard,  
14 I don't think there's any suggestion that this person's  
15 money -- we know who we're talking about and her money is  
16 inherited, is not ill-gotten gains, so I don't think there is  
17 a fear that --

18 THE COURT: I'm not talking about money that -- this  
19 isn't an organized crime case, all right, where the money was  
20 the result of illegal activity, I would assume based on what's  
21 believed by everybody in this room as to the source, but there  
22 is the issue of the fact that if one party, one defendant is  
23 supporting another defendant financially, then that raises  
24 other issues, wouldn't you say?

25 MR. AGNIFILO: I agree. I agree. But as we sit

1 here today, there has been no charge --

2 THE COURT: Right.

3 MR. AGNIFILO: And --

4 THE COURT: Okay.

5 MR. AGNIFILO: -- the money is clean money.

6 THE COURT: I understand.

7 MR. AGNIFILO: I understand.

8 THE COURT: I'm just putting that on the table for  
9 you to chew on it.

10 MR. AGNIFILO: I appreciate that. I am chewing.

11 THE COURT: Good. Anything else? That's it?

12 MR. AGNIFILO: That's it for me.

13 THE COURT: All right. The defendant, Keith  
14 Ranieri, has been charged with sex trafficking, conspiracy to  
15 commit sex trafficking, and conspiracy to cause another to  
16 engage in forced labor. The defendant has moved for release  
17 on bail pending trial. The Court finds that the government  
18 has shown that the defendant is a flight risk, notwithstanding  
19 the proposed conditions. The Court, therefore, denies the  
20 defendant's motion without prejudice.

21 Pretrial detainees have a right to bail under both  
22 the Eighth Amendment and the Bail Reform Act. The latter  
23 provides that a court must release a defendant, quote, subject  
24 to the least restrictive further condition, or a combination  
25 of conditions, that it determines will reasonably assure the

1 appearance of the person as required, the safety of other  
2 persons, and the community, end quote. Only if, after  
3 considering the factors set forth in Title 18 United States  
4 Code Section 1342(g), the Court determines that, quote, no  
5 condition or combination of conditions will reasonably assure  
6 the appearance of the person as required and the safety of any  
7 other person and the community, end quote, may the order --  
8 the Court order the defendant to be held without bail. If,  
9 however, there is probable cause to find that the defendant  
10 committed one of the offenses enumerated by the Bail Reform  
11 Act, a rebuttable presumption arises, quote, that no condition  
12 or combination of conditions will reasonably assure, end  
13 quote, the defendant's appearance or the safety of the  
14 community or others. In such a case, quote, the defendant  
15 bears a limited burden of production to rebut that presumption  
16 by coming forward with evidence that he does not pose a danger  
17 to the community or a risk of flight, end quote. *United*  
18 *States v. English*, 629 F.3d. 311, Second Circuit, 2011.

19 If the defendant offers such evidence, the  
20 presumption favoring detention does not fall away, but, quote,  
21 remains a factor to be considered among those weighed by the  
22 district court, end quote. Even if such a presumption case,  
23 however, quote, the government retains the ultimate burden of  
24 persuasion by clear and convincing evidence that the defendant  
25 presents a danger to the community, and by the lesser standard

1 of preponderance of the evidence that the defendant presents a  
2 risk of flight, end quote. Quoting *United States v. English*.

3 The parties agree that this is a presumption case;  
4 isn't that right?

5 MR. AGNIFILO: That's correct, Judge.

6 THE COURT: Right?

7 MS. PENZA: Yes, Your Honor.

8 THE COURT: The defendant has been indicted by a  
9 federal grand jury on sex trafficking and sex-trafficking  
10 conspiracy charges for which the maximum sentence is life in  
11 prison. The grand jury's indictment conclusively establishes  
12 that there is probable cause to believe that the defendant  
13 committed these offenses. The only questions before the  
14 Court, then, are whether the defendant has rebutted the  
15 presumption in favor of detention, quote, by coming forward  
16 with evidence that he does not pose a danger to the community  
17 or a risk of flight, end quote. Quoting, again the *English*  
18 case, and whether the government has shown that the defendant  
19 is dangerous or a flight risk notwithstanding the proposed  
20 conditions.

21 The defendant has presented the Court with a bail  
22 package that includes a number of conditions of release.  
23 These proposed conditions include a 10 million-dollar  
24 appearance bond; travel restrictions; home detention enforced  
25 by GPS monitoring and round-the-clock armed guards; and

1 restrictions on defendant's access to computers and phones and  
2 contact with his co-defendant, alleged co-conspirators, and  
3 other Nxivm affiliates.

4 The government contends that this bail package is  
5 insufficient to reasonably assure the defendant's appearance  
6 at trial, to protect the safety of the community, or to  
7 mitigate the risk that he will obstruct justice.

8 After considering the four Section 3142(g) factors,  
9 the Court agrees with the government that the proposed bail  
10 package is inadequate to reasonably assure the defendant's  
11 appearance at trial. In the Court's view, all four of these  
12 factors, the nature and circumstances of the offense charged,  
13 the weight of the evidence against the defendant, the history  
14 and characteristics of the defendant, and the nature and  
15 seriousness of the danger to any person or the community that  
16 would be posed by the defendant's release, weigh in favor of  
17 continued detention. As the Court will explain, the first and  
18 third of these factors particularly support continued  
19 detention.

20 First, as to the nature and circumstances of the  
21 offenses charged, the Court notes that the charges on which  
22 the defendant has been indicted are extremely serious. The  
23 sex trafficking and sex-trafficking conspiracy charges are  
24 each punishable by a sentence of life imprisonment, and the  
25 forced labor conspiracy charge is punishable by up to 20 years

1 imprisonment. Because the defendant is charged with sex  
2 trafficking by, quote, force, threat of force, fraud, or  
3 coercion, end quote, the substantive sex trafficking charge is  
4 also subject to a 15-year minimum sentence under Title 18  
5 United States Code Section 1591(b)(1). Faced with the  
6 possibility that, if convicted, he may spend the rest of his  
7 life in prison, the defendant clearly has, quote, a strong  
8 motive to flee, end quote. *United States v. Sabhnani*, 493  
9 F.3d 63, Second Circuit, 2007.

10 Second, as to the defendant's history and  
11 characteristics, the Court finds that this factor strongly  
12 supports detention to avoid the risk of flight. Certain  
13 aspects of the defendant's history and characteristics support  
14 his pretrial release. He is a long-time resident of upstate  
15 New York, and there is no indication that he has a criminal  
16 record, a substance abuse problem, or a history of missed  
17 court appearances. The Court is troubled, however, that  
18 defendant's conduct in recent months, his lack of an ordinary  
19 job or personal financial resources that could secure a  
20 meaningful bond, and his access to third parties' extensive  
21 financial resources all show that he may flee if given the  
22 opportunity.

23 The Court is troubled by indications in the record  
24 that the defendant attempted to allude law enforcement by  
25 moving to Mexico last fall. According to the government,



1 once, quote, law enforcement began interviewing witnesses  
2 about defendant's criminal conduct, end quote, he fled to  
3 Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, where he lived in a luxury villa,  
4 began using fully encrypted email, and stopped using his  
5 phone.

6 In response, defendant argues that he traveled to  
7 Mexico to be with his child and his child's mother, a Mexican  
8 citizen whose U.S. visa expired last October. While he admits  
9 he used different phones and email addresses, he contends that  
10 he did so not to evade law enforcement but to evade  
11 anti-Nxivm -- an anti-Nxivm group that he says harassed him  
12 for years.

13 Finally, defendant contends that the government was  
14 or should have been aware of his location because he filed a  
15 document in state court resigning as executor of the estate of  
16 his deceased significant other. That document identified by  
17 name and location the Mexican notary before whom defendant  
18 appeared, which he argues shows that authorities knew his  
19 location.

20 Defendant's explanations are not persuasive. Even  
21 if the Court were to accept defendant's explanation for why he  
22 traveled to Mexico, this explanation would not give the  
23 Court -- I'm sorry, would still give the Court pause as it  
24 would indicate that the defendant has close personal ties to  
25 Mexico and thus may be a flight risk. In any event, this

1 explanation rings false, as defendant's motion indicates that  
2 the mother of his child lives in or near Monterrey, but  
3 Monterrey is hundreds of miles from Puerto Vallarta. The  
4 Court is skeptical of defendant's explanation that he began  
5 using fully encrypted email and stopped using his phone to  
6 evade Nxivm critics, not law enforcement, as the Court is not  
7 aware how the former could have the ability to track his  
8 phone. Nor is the Court persuaded by defendant's argument  
9 that his filing of the executorship document in state court  
10 indicates that he did not attempt to conceal his location from  
11 the government. The document states that the Mexican notary  
12 before whom he appeared was located in Guadalajara, Jalisco.  
13 According to Google Maps, Guadalajara is about a five-hour  
14 drive from Puerto Vallarta. The Court does not see how the  
15 government should have inferred this location from this  
16 document.

17           The Court also has grave concerns about the  
18 defendant's financial resources. According to defendant's  
19 financial affidavit, he is self-employed and has no income and  
20 no assets other than a 50 percent interest in a home in  
21 Clifton Park, New York, worth approximately \$60,000. He thus  
22 has nothing material tying him to this district, or this state  
23 beyond his half interest in the Clifton Park, New York real  
24 estate. On the other hand, defendant appears to have access  
25 to enormous financial resources contributed by third parties.

1 According to the government, these resources include millions  
2 of dollars as well as access to private air travel and to a  
3 third party's private island in Fiji. Defendant himself  
4 proposes that he should be subject to home detention,  
5 monitored by armed guards at the cost of at least \$40,000, and  
6 possibly more like \$140,000 per month, to be paid through a  
7 special trust funded by third-party contributors. This access  
8 to third parties' extensive financial resources exacerbates  
9 the Court's concern that the defendant might attempt to  
10 abscond if given the opportunity to do so.

11 Nor do defendant's proposed conditions of release  
12 cure these concerns. Defendant proposes release on a  
13 \$10 million bond, but this Court views this bond as basically  
14 worthless, in light of defendant's lack of personal assets.  
15 To cure this defect, defendant proposes that he should be  
16 monitored by armed guards. At this point, however, the Court  
17 is not satisfied that the armed guard condition is a  
18 reasonable alternative to pretrial detention.

19 First, the Court does not yet understand how  
20 defendant intends to pay for the cost of private security.  
21 The defendant cryptically avers that the guards will be paid,  
22 quote, by an irrevocable trust funded by third-party  
23 contributors to pay for reasonable defense costs in connection  
24 with the instant prosecution, end quote. What the Court does  
25 not have in front of it, however, is any information about the

1 trust; its detailed terms; its corpus; or its settlors.

2 Without such information, the Court cannot make a reasoned  
3 assessment of the armed guards' ability to assure defendant's  
4 appearance.

5 The Court, likewise, has in number of questions  
6 about who would be guarding the defendant and their ability to  
7 prevent him from fleeing. How, for example, was TorchStone  
8 selected as the proposed security company? Who does  
9 TorchStone employ as guards, and what sort of background check  
10 and security screenings are these guards subject to? While  
11 the Court has no intention of impugning TorchStone's or its  
12 employees' integrity by asking these questions, it is  
13 concerned that without a great deal more of information it  
14 cannot make an informed assessment of these guards' ability to  
15 prevent the defendant from fleeing.

16 And I might add, that the Court really isn't in a  
17 position to be assessing law enforcement techniques and the  
18 qualifications of law enforcement officers. We have law  
19 enforcement officers who work for the government and, with all  
20 due respect to retired law enforcement officers, I don't think  
21 that it's the job of the Court to be micromanaging the  
22 activities of law enforcement or replacements for law  
23 enforcement. And this is particularly true here where the  
24 defendant may have both access to extraordinary financial  
25 resources and a number of loyal adherents, which could easily

1 facilitate his escape at some point.

2 For the aforementioned reasons, the Court concludes  
3 that the proposed conditions of release are insufficient to  
4 reasonably assure the defendant's appearance at trial. The  
5 Court therefore denies the defendant's motion for bail. This  
6 denial is, however, without prejudice to the refiling of a  
7 revised bail package that provides greater transparency about  
8 the defendant's access to financial resources and the proposed  
9 terms of his home detention and armed guards. Because the  
10 Court determines that the government has shown that these  
11 conditions are insufficient to reasonably assure the  
12 defendant's appearance, the Court need not consider at this  
13 time whether the government also has shown that these  
14 conditions are insufficient to protect the community and  
15 others.

16 So the application is denied without prejudice. And  
17 you understand what the concerns of the Court are.

18 MR. AGNIFILO: Very much so, thank you.

19 THE COURT: All right. Is there anything else from  
20 the government today?

21 MS. PENZA: No, Your Honor, thank you.

22 THE COURT: All right.

23 Now with respect to the government, if for any  
24 reason we require a meeting before, I think it's the 25th --

25 MS. PENZA: Yes, Your Honor.

1 THE COURT: -- of July, please give adequate notice  
2 to both of the defendants, because I'm requiring that the  
3 defendants appear including Ms. Mack at every status  
4 conference.

5 MS. PENZA: Understood, Your Honor.

6 THE COURT: All right.

7 MS. PENZA: Thank you.

8 THE COURT: That's your obligation to keep them  
9 informed so that they can give Ms. Mack adequate time to get  
10 here, because that's the requirement of this Court in this  
11 very significant case.

12 MS. PENZA: Absolutely, Your Honor.

13 THE COURT: Got it?

14 MS. PENZA: Yes.

15 THE COURT: Is there anything else from you, sir?

16 MR. BUCKLEY: No, thank you, Your Honor.

17 THE COURT: Anything else from you, sir?

18 MR. AGNIFILO: No, thank you, Your Honor.

19 THE COURT: All right. We're adjourned.

20 (Matter concluded.)

21 \* \* \* \* \*

22 I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript from the  
23 record of proceedings in the above-entitled matter.

24 s/ Georgette K. Betts

June 13, 2018

25 GEORGETTE K. BETTS

DATE